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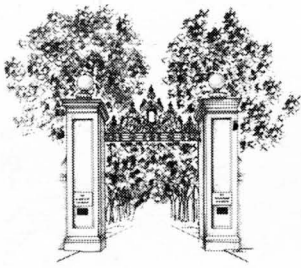
Library History

4-1991

News&Notes, 1991

The Rockefeller University

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News & Notes

Sonya Mirsky retires, banks on future

Sonya Wohl Mirsky, whose name has been practically synonymous with the Rockefeller library for generations of students, postdocs and faculty, will retire at the end of June as University Librarian and Curator of Special Collections. She plans to remain on campus part-time, handling the library's acquisitions and book cataloging.

Mirsky, a native New Yorker, joined the library in 1949, fresh from her undergraduate studies in science and mathematics at City College of New York—an unusual course of study for women in those days—and a master's degree in library science from Columbia University. "I made the decision when I was 12 to be a librarian," says Mirsky in her characteristically determined way, "and when I was in high school I refined that decision. I decided to become a science librarian." Mirsky continued her education while working at the Institute (as the University was called in those days) by taking graduate courses in mathematics at The Courant Institute of New York University.

Originally hired as an assistant librarian to handle cataloging and circulation, Mirsky worked her way up and was promoted in 1961 to associate librarian, a position she held until 1977, when she was appointed head librarian.

Mirsky was designated Uni-

☛ See **Mirsky** on page 4

Citing the importance of encouraging the research of junior faculty members, Sonya Wohl Mirsky, the University Librarian and Curator of Special Collections, has donated \$393,265 to the university. Mirsky, whose retirement is announced at left (see also related story, page 3), has requested that the interest on the funds, which will be added to the university's endowment, be used to support assistant professors with independent laboratories.

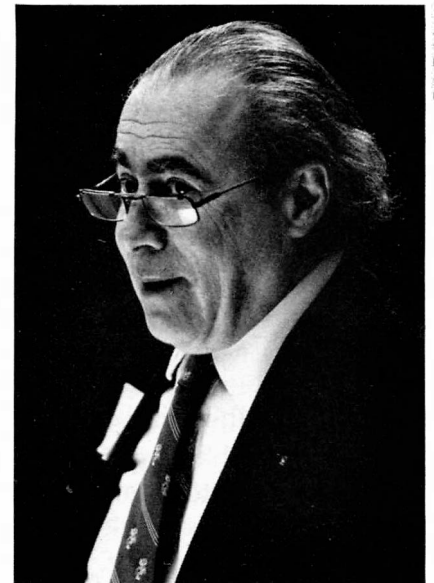
President David Baltimore, in acknowledging the gift, said, "As we move ahead with our plans to recruit outstanding young scientists at the assistant professor level and set them up as heads of new laboratories, it is good to know that we have the support of one of the most prominent, longtime members of the university community."

Genome Project: the ultimate map

The human genome—the repertoire of the 50,000 to 100,000 genes contained in each cell's nucleus—is the human book of life, encoding within its pages all the instructions our cellular machinery uses to build and maintain our bodies. The Human Genome Project is an attempt to read this vast book from beginning to end. Participants collaborating on the project hope to map the position of each gene on the chromosomes and to spell out the sequence of DNA that gives each gene its meaning.

This effort was the topic at a meeting of The Rockefeller University Council on April 4. The Council, a group of more than 150 distinguished men and women, promotes understanding of, and inspires private support for, the university's scientific endeavors.

The project, President David Baltimore said, was "born in sociological and scientific controversy." The roots of this controversy extend from Darwin's time, when the theory of evolution disturbed humanity's view of its place on earth, to the Nazis' perversion of



Norton Zinder

Bob Reichert

☛ See **Genome** on page 2

Announcements

Manny Hanny Race deadline nears

The first race of the Manufacturers Hanover Corporate Challenge will be run May 9, and the deadline for signing up for the race is Friday, April 19, according to Robin Maloney, Rockefeller's Associate Controller and team captain. The race, 3.5 miles through Central Park, is meant for every level of runner, including walkers. Each year, approximately 10,000 athletes participate in the event, including many from the university community. There is an entry fee of \$10.00, and participants from Rockefeller will receive a university T-shirt. The second Corporate Challenge Race will be run on June 6; the deadline for application to this race is May 17. Those interested in running should contact Maloney at x7736 for applications.

Last Space Lecture is Tuesday

The last talk in spring's Space Science Lecture Series, "Lunar and Martian Agriculture," will be presented at noon on April 16 in Tower 305. The speaker will be Professor Frank Salisbury of the University of Utah. For information, contact Erich Jarvis, x7733.

Tri-Institutional Recital today

Today at noon the Tri-Institutional Recital Series presents violinist Dmitri Berlinsky and pianist Svetlana Gorokhovich in a free concert in Caspary Auditorium. A native of Leningrad, the 22-year-old Berlinsky is an internationally acclaimed artist, Winner of the 1989 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and the Grand Prize at the 1987 Montreal Violin Competition, among other prizes. Soviet pianist Gorokhovich has performed in solo recitals and chamber music concerts throughout the Soviet Union, Italy and the U.S. At today's recital, the two will perform works of Schnittke, Franck, Tchaikovsky and Bloch.

Mirsky (continued from page 1)

versity Librarian by then-president Joshua Lederberg in 1979. Her duties included not only overall management of the library, but responsibility for special collections as well. She is also the unofficial "historian on call," she says. "I was most likely to know where information was, or who had it." In 1986 she undertook the compilation of a faculty bibliography. It currently has over 25,000 references, a "partial list." "When Dr. Lederberg asked me to do this, he said 'Only you would have the courage to tackle this job,'" she recalls.

Among her accomplishments during her years at Rockefeller, Mirsky counts computerizing the library her most significant. Armed with 18 months of computer courses and countless conversations with experts in the field, she oversaw the computerization of the library's catalog, circulation system and acquisitions.

Mirsky's other achievements include vastly increasing the scope of the library's collection, and—what might become her most tangible contribution to future generations of library users—beginning the process of air conditioning the facility. Floor one is currently being equipped with an air conditioning system. "When I came here in 1949," Mirsky says, "the head of the library at that time assured me that we'd be air conditioned within five years. It's taken a bit more than five years, but at least it's happening."

Asked to sum up her thoughts about her career as a librarian here, Mirsky was quick to reply, "The campus is my home away from home. I may be giving up my title as University Librarian, but the title I'm not giving up is 'Resident Mother Hen.'" She gazed out the window for a while, then added, on a more serious note, "The people here are family. What has motivated me over the years is that I care. I really care. I've been the recipient of much care, and it hasn't been unilateral. That means a lot."

—by Enid Goldberg

Summer Research Assistant List available in Personnel

A booklet compiling resumes of college students currently seeking summer employment at the university may be reviewed in the Personnel Office. This group of over 100 applicants represents (1) students who wrote directly to the university seeking summer lab positions and (2) individuals who previously applied for the SURF Program (Dean's Office). See Mary Ann or Brenda in Personnel to review the resumes for possible placement. →



News & Notes is published on Fridays throughout the academic year by the Public Affairs Office of Rockefeller University. Suggestions for articles are welcome and may be sent to Box 68, or call 570-8967. Articles may also be submitted via electronic mail to *newsnotes*. The deadline for each Friday's issue is the preceding Monday at 5:00 p.m. The Rockefeller University is an equal opportunity employer and has an affirmative action program to increase the employment of women and members of protected groups at all job levels. Editor: Robert Brown. Designer: Patricia Sadiq.